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Feb. 24, 2000

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Mr. Vernon A. Williams, Secretary  
Surface Transportation Board  
Office of the Secretary  
Case Control Unit  
Attn: STB EX Parte No. 582  
1925 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Dear Sir or Madam:

Canpar Industries, which is located in Grand Forks, B.C., is a manufacturer of particleboard and is a major user of rail service in the U.S. and Canada. The purpose of this letter is to comment on the issues to be discussed on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2000 in Ex Parte 582.

We encourage the Surface Transportation Board to focus on whether the proposed CN-BNSF combination is good for shippers, not on potential downstream effects. The CN-BNSF combination should be judged on its merits and if other carriers propose mergers, then these cases need to be evaluated on their own merits.

The timing of the proposed CN-BNSF combination is not the central issue for our company. Our concern is service and cost. Recent mergers have failed on service, not because of the timing. Accordingly, the STB should focus on these concerns, as should be the case for any future mergers.

The STB has a comprehensive process to evaluate railroad transactions and protect the public interest. It should fairly evaluate the CN-BNSF combination according to that process. Do not let other railroads abuse this process to protect themselves and not the shippers.

Regards,

Gord Smith (Traffic Manager)

Manufacturer of **PARTABOARD**<sup>®</sup>